IN THE CLAIMS:

1-86 (Canceled)

87. (Withdrawn) A process for forming a mica-filled polypropylene or polypropylene polyethylene copolymer or blend extruded sheet comprising the steps of:

(a) forming an extrudable admixture of polypropylene or polypropylene polyethylene copolymer or blend resin and mica;

(b) extruding said extrudable admixture of polypropylene or polypropylene polyethylene copolymer or blend resin and mica at elevated temperature;

(c) passing the resulting extruded admixture of polypropylene, polypropylene polyethylene copolymer, or blend resin and mica through a multiple roll stack, at least one roll of said roll stack having a matte finish;

(d) passing said extruded admixture of polypropylene, polypropylene polyethylene copolymer, or blend resin and mica at least partially around said roll having a matte finish;

(e) controlling the speed of said extrusion process, the size, temperature, and configuration of said roll stack such that the surface of said extruded admixture of polypropylene, polypropylene polyethylene copolymer, or blend resin and mica in contact with said matte roll has a matted structure; and

~~(f)~~(e) recovering an extruded sheet comprising a polypropylene or polypropylene polyethylene copolymer or blend and mica moieties, said sheet having a matted surface.

88. (Withdrawn) The extruded sheet prepared according to the process of claim 87.

89. (Withdrawn) A microwaveable, food contact compatible, disposable, rigid and strong, mica-filled polyolefin container, wherein the polyolefin resin is selected from the group consisting of polypropylene and polypropylene polyethylene copolymer or blend, and a mixture of these, and wherein the container is formed by a process comprising the steps of:

(a) forming an extrudable admixture of the polyolefin resin and mica;

(b) extruding said extrudable admixture of the polyolefin resin and mica at elevated temperature;

(c) passing the resulting extruded admixture of the polyolefin resin and mica through a multiple roll stack of rolls, at least one roll of said stack having a matte finish;

(d) passing said extruded admixture of the polyolefin resin and mica at least partially around said roll having a matte finish;

(e) controlling the speed of said extrusion process, the size, temperature, and configuration of said roll stack such that the surface of said extruded admixture of the polyolefin resin and mica not in contact with said matte roll has a coarse-grained structure;

(f) thermoforming said extruded admixture of the polyolefin resin, and mica; and

(g) recovering a container having a micronodular surface and a rough surface and exhibiting a melting point of no less than 250°F, said container being dimensionally stable and resistant to grease, sugar, and water at temperatures up to about 220°F and having sufficient toughness to be resistant to cutting by serrated flatware.

90. (Withdrawn) The microwaveable, food contact compatible, disposable, rigid and strong, mica-filled polyolefin container according to claim 89, wherein the container is a plate.

91 (Withdrawn) The microwaveable, food contact compatible, disposable, rigid and strong, mica-filled polyolefin container according to claim 89, wherein the container is a cup.

92. (Withdrawn) The microwaveable, food contact compatible, disposable, rigid and strong, mica-filled polyolefin container according to claim 89, wherein the container is a bowl.

93. (Withdrawn) The microwaveable, food contact compatible, disposable, rigid and strong, mica-filled polyolefin container according to claim 89, wherein the container is a tray.

94. (Withdrawn) The microwaveable, food contact compatible, disposable, rigid and strong, mica-filled polyolefin container according to claim 89, wherein the container is a bucket.

95. (Withdrawn) The microwaveable, food contact compatible, disposable, rigid and strong, mica-filled polyolefin container according to claim 89, wherein the container is a soufflè dish.

96-99 (Canceled)

100. (Currently amended) The process of claim 108, wherein thermoforming the container comprises at least one drape, vacuum, pressure, free blowing, ~~matched die,~~ billow drape, vacuum snap-back, billow vacuum, plug assist vacuum, plug assist pressure, pressure reverse draw with plug assist vacuum, reverse draw with plug assist, pressure bubble immersion, trapped sheet, slip, diaphragm, twin-sheet cut sheet, twin-sheet rolled forming, and pillow forming.

101. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 108, wherein thermoforming the container comprises vacuum forming the container in a mold controlled to form the micronodular surface on the surface of the container not in contact with the mold surface.

102. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 108, wherein the extruded sheet further comprises at least one additive selected~~chosen~~ from the group consisting of coupling agents, process aids, lubricants, nucleating agents, antistatic agents, antioxidants, and coloring agents.

103. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 108, wherein at least one additive is present in the mixture.

104. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 102, wherein a coupling agent is present in the mixture, and the coupling agents comprises at least one of: silanes; organofunctional silicone compounds; chlorinated hydrocarbons with and without silane; in situ polymerization products of monomers; modified polyolefins; maleic anhydride; acrylic modified polypropylene; and maleic anhydride modified polypropylene.

105. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 102, wherein a process aid is present in the mixture, and the process aid comprises at least one of waxes and fluorinated polymers.

106. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 102, wherein a coloring agent is present, and the coloring agent comprises at least one of pigments and dyes.

107. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 106, wherein the pigments comprises at least one of carbon black, titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, iron oxides, and mixed metal oxides.

108. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a container comprising:

(a) providing at least one extruded sheet prepared from a mixture of:

i) mica; and

ii) a polyolefin comprising polypropylene, polypropylene polyethylene copolymer or a blend of polypropylene and polyethylene, and

(b) thermoforming the sheet at a temperature of at least about 265°F using only one mold, wherein said mold is in contact with a first side of said extruded sheet, thereby providing a container that:

i) is dimensionally stable;

ii) is resistant to deformation from grease, sugar or water contact at a temperature of up to at least about 220°F;

iii) is resistant to cutting by serrated polystyrene flatware;

iv) has a melting point at a temperature of no less than about 250°F; and

v) has a micronodular surface ~~comprising~~ on said at least one side not contacted with said mold, and a non-micronodular surface, wherein the micronodular surface has a surface roughness that is greater than a surface roughness of the non-micronodular surface.

109. (Withdrawn) The container prepared according to the process of claim 108.

110. (Presently amended) A process for preparing a container comprising a first side and a food contact side:

~~(c)~~ (a) providing at least one extruded sheet prepared from a mixture of:

i) mica; and

ii) a polyolefin comprising polypropylene, polypropylene polyethylene copolymer or a blend of polypropylene and polyethylene, and

~~(d)~~(b) thermoforming the sheet at a temperature of at least about 265° F using only one mold, and wherein said mold is in contact with a first side of said extruded sheet, thereby providing a container that:

i) is dimensionally stable;

ii) is resistant to deformation from grease, sugar or water contact at a temperature of at least about 220°F;

iii) is resistant to cutting by serrated polystyrene flatware;

iv) has a melting point at a temperature of no less than about 250°F; and

v) wherein said first side comprises a non-micronodular surface and said food contact side comprises a micronodular surface.

111. (Currently amended) The process of claim 110, wherein thermoforming the container comprises at least one drape, vacuum, pressure, free blowing, ~~matched die,~~ billow drape, vacuum snap-back, billow vacuum, plug assist vacuum, plug assist pressure, pressure reverse draw with plug assist vacuum, reverse draw with plug assist, pressure bubble immersion, trapped sheet, slip, diaphragm, twin-sheet cut sheet rolled forming, and pillow forming.

112. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 110, wherein thermoforming the container comprises vacuum forming the container in a mold controlled to form the micronodular surface of the container not in contact with the mold surface.

113. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 110, wherein the extruded sheet further comprises at least one additive chosen from coupling agents, process aids, lubricants, nucleating agents, antistatic agents, antioxidants, and coloring agents.

114. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 110, wherein at least one additive is present in the mixture.

115. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 113, wherein the coupling agents comprises at least one of: silanes; organofunctional silicone compounds; chlorinated hydrocarbons with and without silane; in situ polymerization products of monomers; modified polyolefins; maleic anhydride; acrylic modified polypropylene; and maleic anhydride modified polypropylene.

116. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 113, wherein the process aid comprises at least one of waxes and fluorinated polymers.

117. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 113, wherein the coloring agent comprises at least one of pigments and dyes.

118. (Previously Presented) the process of claim 117, wherein the pigments comprises at least of carbon black, titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, iron oxides, and mixed metal oxides.